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ABSTRACT

The broad question addressed is whether the Upper Midwest needs a new regional educational laboratory and, if so, why and where and for whom? Conclusions were reached after a sampling of deans of education, chief state school officers, classroom teachers, National Institute of Education staff members, local superintendents, and other knowledgeable persons was interviewed. The author concludes that the region is not really ripe for a full-scale laboratory. He further recommends that, rather than conduct a round of hearings on the need for a laboratory, it would be more constructive to assemble representative chief education officers, deans and presidents of universities, and teacher organization leaders to discuss the options with them. Such a group could elect to form a planning council or a regional council with an explicit problem-solving agenda for a period of 18 months and a very limited staff and budget. If there were to be a laboratory for the region, it could evolve out of such a council and would have a very explicit sense of mission and a precedent for participatory decision-making. (Author/IRT)

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THE UPPER MIDWEST AND REGIONAL LABORATORIES

Joseph M. Cronin

October, 1980

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EA 013 430

THE UPPER MIDWEST AND REGIONAL LABORATORIES

Joseph M. Cronin*

Does the Upper Midwest need a new regional education laboratory and, if so, why and where and for whom?

The National Institute of Education staff in 1980 requested an analysis of three more specific questions:

1. Who now serves Education R and D needs of the Midwest region and what needs are unmet, and
2. Which organizational options including the use of existing institutions or creation of new labs or councils should be considered, and
3. What combination of states should be included in a newly designed region?

Much of the data are as subjective as any in the world of opinion surveys. The Midwest or Upper Midwest may look like a region on a map in Washington or Chicago, but is actually a very large collection of very large states and thousands of diverse school districts. The economy moves from iron mines to soft coal, from apples and tulips to cotton fields. No one in the region will acknowledge a lead state or single voice within any state to express the consumer view. Each person is very special, each state feels exceptional, and each opinion is based on a unique career perspective.

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*Although now the President of the Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corporation, he was the former Illinois State Superintendent of Education 1975-80, and for two years Policy Chairman of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Deans of education were interviewed - as well as chief state school officers, classroom teachers, NIE staff, Washington, D.C. national organizations, superintendents and other knowledgeable persons - not all but a sampling - during the summer and early fall of 1980.

The writer recently finished a 66 month state education leadership assignment in Illinois - and has been a classroom teacher, principal, university professor, dean, and superintendent and respects the uniqueness of each perspective. For other purposes Des Moines, Minneapolis, Madison and Milwaukee had been visited in the recent past. Lansing and Indianapolis and Urbana were revisited for the purpose of this study and to supplement the telephone interviews and letters to NIE on this topic. The writer included the views of veteran observers and newcomers, minorities and women, CEMREL advocates, staff and critics, and as many others who would comment on a draft version of this document.

The Midwest As An Economic Area

What states are Midwestern? Region Five of HEW and currently the Education Department includes Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Geographically, these states and Iowa are strong farming states which produce corn, soybeans, hogs and dairy products in large quantities. These states also generate much of the nation's wealth in iron ore, steel production, automobiles and tractors. The railroad, trucking and airplane industries thrive in this highly productive region. Coal, oil refineries and nuclear power plants contribute vast supplies of energy needed in this advanced economy.

Educational Research And Development

Who now provides research and education development services in this region? Strong and prestigious land grant universities dominate the Midwest:

1. The University of Wisconsin at Madison runs a National Research and Development Center in individualized schooling (I.G.E.). Milwaukee has a Lau Center to provide help on bilingual education.
2. Ohio State University is the National Center for Research on Vocational Education.
3. The University of Illinois has NIE funds for a major study of reading and runs a significant center for the evaluation of instruction.
4. Indiana University for a decade concentrated on curriculum development in fields such as social studies. It also houses a race and sex desegregation center.
5. Minnesota is the locus of considerable study of guidance, counseling and child psychology.
6. Michigan State University runs a major NIE Institute on Learning and Teaching. Also, Bob Green is Dean of Urban Studies and is an expert on racial and metropolitan issues.

Each of these great state universities is linked more or less closely with other large regional or urban universities in the same state.

The University of Chicago and Northwestern University also influence research and development in education largely by the preparation of research and teaching faculty and by individual research work in fields such as mastery learning (Benjamin Bloom) or finance and School Productivity (J. Allan Thomas) at the University of Chicago.

Regional Network of Educational and Research And Development - As It Exists

NIE in 1978 asked the Central Midwest Regional Lab in St. Louis to assume responsibility for Midwestern states without a lab or only partially served by a lab. As many as ten states now receive all or much of their regional services from CEMREL. These states include:

Kentucky	Minnesota
Illinois	Michigan
Iowa	Wisconsin
Indiana	Tennessee (East)
Ohio	Missouri - shared with McREL

These states include a great number of people and institutions:

12.3 million - elementary and secondary students

1.2 million - teachers, principals and professional staff

730 - colleges and universities

Also, North Dakota and South Dakota, if included, would add another 280,000 students to the total. The Dakotas are now served by McREL as well as services from CEMREL.

The Appalachian Educational Laboratory in Charleston, West Virginia, serves seventeen counties in Southeastern Ohio, which is approximately one-quarter of the territory (although not that much of the school population) of Ohio.

The Northwest Laboratory in Portland, Oregon was mentioned spontaneously as a helpful and responsible "regional" service by Chief State School Officers in Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana and North Dakota who express appreciation both for the outreach of that lab and for specific services such as help with Title One training and minimal competency testing. The NWL was willing to contract for studies or technical assistance projects at request by state

education agencies. Illinois and South Dakota also mentioned help from the Far West lab on the topics of teacher centers, teacher accountability and, for South Dakota, energy curriculum issues.

Previous Attempts to Maintain Upper Midwest Labs

One "Big Ten" Dean of Education declared that any effort to establish another Great Lakes area lab should begin with an inquiry as to why three had failed in the late 1960's.

Opinions differ as to why these labs failed. Some long-time observers expressed discontent with the relevance and practicability of lab programs. The most charitable view is that the U.S. Office of Education ran out of money and could not support as many labs as originally planned. Another view suggests that key legislators in other regions expressed more effective support for maintaining their centers. Still another and very perceptive explanation is that many new ventures (Title I, Title III, Title V, and Collective Bargaining) stole center stage and many educators' energy from 1965-1969. The 1980's might be very different.

Those participating or closely observing those labs make these comments:

1. The Illinois Lab (University of Illinois) was really a National Consortium of people and universities interested in "early childhood education" as a theme. There developed "unbelievable problems in keeping it together".
2. The Minnesota Lab (UMREL) was thought "good" by one observer but "not very satisfactory", "grandiose, with glamorous ideas", "not practical", "so poorly run, behavioral science not appropriate" by others close to the scene.

3. The Michigan-Ohio Lab (MOREL) was variously termed "a fiasco", "unnecessary", "not responsive to the needs of the areas" and lacking in concern for teachers or deans. John Corbally remembers the lab as simply a marriage of convenience at that time. One top Ohio official complained that Michigan would not share many resources while expressing praise today for both AEL "remarkable, really bright young people" and for CEMREL. Michigan educators remember that MOREL concentrated on "people change" and therefore developed few tangible products for outsiders to evaluate. Also, the organizations who helped develop the original proposal were never involved or invited to help MOREL achieve its goals.

Again, this is a region where top education leaders will go for services anywhere in the nation to obtain a useful research, development, observation training service. The Northwest Lab was the most favorably perceived of all the federal regional labs. Several states mentioned ECS as useful on problems such as school finance and potentially even more helpful in the future. If there was a consensus it was that teachers, administrators, education deans and others would need to be closely involved in determining R and D needs and priorities if a lab was to succeed.

The CEMREL Record

CEMREL initially served part of Missouri, Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee, Southern Illinois and parts of Ohio. The CEMREL staff developed strong curriculum programs in arts and aesthetic education as well as in mathematics, activities resembling a National Center in the depth and scope of work. Only since 1978 was CEMREL directed to move North and serve the Great Lakes area. The CEMREL Board and its numerous advisory panels expanded to include

persons from the newer states. CEMREL staff toured the state capitols to discern needs and priorities for service, a fact which all state education officers acknowledged.

CEMREL has broadened its services to include an urban education program (Detroit is a close partner) and a writing improvement program in cooperation with the University of Iowa. The Regional Development Exchange program (financed by N.I.E.) operates in many of the states.

Four states feel they are being offered more help than they either can use or are organized to use. Several chiefs are mildly apologetic that CEMREL is not used by them to the fullest extent. Those of the Northern Great Lakes states (Michigan and Minnesota) say CEMREL can't possibly provide that much help and that a new lab or regional council is needed. Several National participant-observers confirm the latter view - that there is too much territory to serve and that NIE should create either a new lab or a regional education collaborative.

R & D Service Priorities

CEMREL has surveyed ten states in trying to identify needs systematically and carefully. The CEMREL staff report unanimity on priorities such as basic skills and school improvement. Established CEMREL projects, such as aesthetic education, attract support from six of the ten states. The complete list of priorities is submitted to NIE in a separate CEMREL work plan.

Chief state school officers divide over the issue of whether help in curriculum is the central issue or whether help is needed on a broader range of questions such as:

Declining Enrollment and Shrinking Resources (2)

Technology in the Schools (2)

Discipline and Vandalism (2)

Dropout Prevention (2)

Reaching the Lower Half of Students

Serving the Indian Population

Teaching the Gifted

Finance of Schools

Several chiefs identified needs in the curriculum areas such as foreign languages, economics and the repackaging of Federal ESEA Title programs to make more of an impact on school children. One mentioned teacher burn-out as an issue.

Race or sex equity or bilingual concern were not prominent among the needs expressed as priorities to be met by a regional lab. Of course, the region already draws upon other race-sex desegregation centers (e.g., in Michigan or Indiana-Illinois or the Lau Center in Milwaukee). Race and sex equity services presumably could be performed by a regional lab but the Congress authorized a separate regional service for desegregation services separate from research and development activities.

Federal research and dissemination activity in special education and vocational education has by acts of Congress been fragmented. Vocational education was well-developed as a Federal specialty before the other programs (ESEA or NIE) came along. Handicapped education is by etiology and emphasis a separate field, or has been considered "special" and therefore apart until the most recent wave of legislation calling for "least restrictive alternatives" for children.

Teachers express concern over a number of research dissemination issues and formats. The NEA affiliates strongly promote the "teacher center" movement in which teachers actually run or hold majority control of in-service activities conducted for the schools. Teacher centers provide a constructive, supportive, environment for teachers who may wish to develop instructional techniques, learn new content such as "metrics," or compare notes on education practice with other teachers. Urban teachers, many of them represented by the AFT, express concern about 94-142, "mainstreaming," and in particular the educational care of hostile or emotionally disturbed children who might be placed in their classroom.

Possible Option for the Midwest

What are the policy options for NIE and the Department of Education for improving Midwest Research and Development services?

1. Expand an Existing Lab

Could CEMREL extend sufficient services to the eight to ten states discussed in this paper? The director and several strong supporters of this approach say "Why not"? Advocates point out that new territory was added without adding many dollars. The overall regional administrative structure is in place, the CEMREL Board has expanded, and CEMREL is willing to try to provide additional services to the larger region.

One could argue that any lab that tried to serve 28% of the Nation's students should therefore have at least 25% of the resources including dollars. Conversely, why allocate 10 or 15% of the total NIE lab budget for an additional lab when a large portion of it would go into setting up a new and somewhat duplicative structure -- a director, a secretary, book-keeper, assistant, clerks, Xerox machine, etc. All of that is in St. Louis now at the CEMREL office.

The Midwest after all, one might argue, is really one piece. The hub may be Chicago, but that is a huge city with a very busy airport. Those who receive the service can be reasonably well served whether the headquarters were Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago or St. Louis -- all approximately one hour apart by air.

Many of those interviewed said "We don't need another lab." A few said, "Fund the existing one more adequately." Others argued that enough help was available now. Still another argued that much more money was needed if any lab, let alone two, were to make a difference. CEMREL said that even with more money, CEMREL would still need to be highly selective within a budget of two or three million dollars.

Critics say, "Let us go wherever we want for ideas and useful research." Several educators mentioned that a group such as ECS was or could be very helpful with legislative or executive branch priorities such as school finance studies or cost/quality of education analyses. Some felt that any existing lab would respond to requests for a proposal if state or local schools find the money.

2(A) Develop a New Regional Lab

Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan educators express much greater interest in a Northern or Upper Lab than do most of their counterparts in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Iowa's educators have mixed emotions, since both CEMREL and McREL have offered help on research and development issues.

The Northern tier of states feel that St. Louis is a long distance away, that the needs of school districts are enormous and could not be met by a lab serving so many school districts and states. Several of the advocates are very experienced educational reformers who believe:

1. Education needs a new delivery system, especially to reach underachievers, the bottom half of students -- the less academic, and
2. Education must learn how to use technology, to harness the computer as a marvelous resource for instruction.

Meanwhile critics of the new lab solution point out that two or three prior attempts to establish labs in the Upper Midwest failed. "They were not practical, not down to earth", or "they lacked a broad base of support" were among the lingering criticisms of the 1960's experiments. Even one proponent said "If NIE is to spend money on another lab, and I'm sure they should, then we should have one up here".

Would three or four states coalesce that well? Wisconsin and Minnesota enjoy a "common market" relationship in higher education and share many similar values about quality education. Michigan is so large that it is not immediately perceived as a natural partner -- either to the West or by neighbors to the South. "Would Michigan share their resources or use all the money on local projects and priorities?" The Detroit area along could soak up all the funds!" This is one of the more explicit concerns raised. The Dakotas are not that sure that they should look East when the view West is both reassuring and promising.

In short, there is support for an Upper Midwest Lab but not yet very deep and no consensus exists where it might be located or who should be in it. If there was to be one, Minnesota and Wisconsin and Michigan would be the natural core of the region.

2(B) Establish an Urban Lab

"Large urban school districts...have special needs and special problems in financing large scale projects designed to solve significant educational problems...If NIE is considering expanding the R and D network to provide better services, the big city schools could benefit far more closely from custom service than from closer proximity to a lab."

This is the plea of the Chicago School Superintendent, Dr. Caruso, but Detroit school officials agree. AERA and CEDAR spokesmen see merit in the urban lab, a "region in concept" rather than in geography.

Each city, as many as thirty, would designate a high-level research person as a contributing partner and professional liaison. The cities would contribute and raise money for projects of common concern. The city school should not simply be recipients but active contributors and adaptors of solutions to their problems -- which are vastly different in type and scale from rural and many suburban schools.

Others have acknowledged this need for an R and D consortium of city schools. The Great City School Research Council for many years existed on funds from the cities themselves. CEMREL has organized an urban school project to respond to the needs of Midwestern cities -- especially in Ohio but also Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Memphis, St. Louis, Indianapolis among others not previously mentioned. Critics might challenge this configuration on several grounds:

A. The very largest cities, Dr. Joseph Hannon of Chicago often said, differ exponentially from the lesser cities. If there were to be a big city R and D network, it should be national. It may not make sense to organize regionally for urban school services.

B. City problems now splash over into older suburbs and larger towns -- for example, poverty, truancy, racial concentrations, bilingual issues, violence, outmoded curriculum. Which of these is strictly a big city phenomenon? What is uniquely urban about a Chicago priority or "Mastery learning" or a solution?

CEMREL staff says, "Give us funds and we can expand what we have begun". The lab is located in a major city, St. Louis. Why set up a new superstructure when Art Jefferson and Margaret Bush Wilson, NAACP President, are on the CEMREL Board along with Franklin Walter of Ohio and with other urban Educators on advisory panels?

3. Establish a Regional Council

NIE does not really have large sums of money for another full-scale lab or three, or even for much more than a planning venture. Also, several top Midwest educators appear to admire the Northwest Lab for its responsiveness and mode of participation.

Therefore, NIE might establish a Regional Council of twelve or fifteen persons, from each state the State Superintendent, a teacher leader, and a university dean of education to plan cooperative exchanges of research, proven educational practices, and knowledgeable staff. Money should be spent on three or four two day meetings each year with mutually agreed upon agendas on the topics of great and compelling urgency. The Chief State

School Officers must themselves personally attend (not simply send a designee and must have contributed topics to the agenda.) The chiefs should not have a majority of votes but should, as they do in the Northwest Lab, contribute extra information and staff because of the assessment and evaluation of needs they must regularly carry out.

The above features characterize the Northwest Lab and Southeast Regional Council. This explains in part why they are such popular and successful models. The CEMREL Board tries to mix the various roles represented -- a teacher from one state, Chief from another, university president from a third. The regional council builds "job-alike" networks to agree on mutual issues that can be researched.

NIE, RDX, and FIPSE money could flow into and support such a council. Federal, state and local funds could be contributed by state and local leaders to support studies of specific topics.

Critics would say a Council is not a Lab. Also, councils would feel shortchanged financially and might aspire quickly to Lab status. A council is more of a forum, and is somewhat limited in what it could actually achieve. The Midwest chiefs are very busy -- they have large states and large staffs to collect and assemble research data for them.

With a little money, the Council approach buys peace, time and a chance to test out a new region.

Of course, CEMREL says -- if you want a regional council that is different, just tell us. If you want it to succeed, give us enough additional money. But don't just spread thin what we or you have now.

4. Use Existing Institutions

This option may be more clearly visualized in other geographical regions which have inter-state collaboratives -- such as the New England School Development Council or in some ways the Southern Regional Board.

One must find an institution capable of crossing state lines and carrying on with ease the research and development activities expected of a lab. The North Central Association, for example, composes a very huge region including the Midwest, and some of the South and West but is exceptionally large and essentially an accrediting organization. A not-for-profit firm or association might be interested but it was difficult for anyone in the Midwest to argue for one for more than a few seconds.

Only a few come readily to mind. The Educational Research Council of America (Greater Cleveland) in the past has taken on affiliates in other states. It was not mentioned, however. Minnesota has a Higher Education Assistance Fund but it operates in the specialized area of student loans. The Educational Testing Service has for the Midwest an Evanston Office. Michigan has an assessment center entitled High Scope which excels at evaluations of pre-school programs. The Midwest does not have as many auxiliary networks and think tanks as does each of the Coasts.

Universities are not generally viewed as appropriate places for regional labs. Research centers, yes, but not labs. Midwestern state universities in particular are strong engines both for the production of knowledge and the development of a curriculum. However, the annual appropriations must ordinarily be approved by a state legislature, although this may not be the case in Michigan. Except for the University of Minnesota, which enjoys a "common market" relationship with Wisconsin,

it is hard to picture any one university as an inter-state service and dissemination agent.

Perhaps this is unfair. The University of Wisconsin now exports the Individually Guided Education materials and strategies to other states -- as far away as Connecticut. Ohio State University serves as a National lab for the purposes of research and development on vocational education. Critics who worry about university-based labs may have in mind certain private prestigious research universities and neglect the potential of the much more service-oriented land grant university of the Midwest. Midwestern educators say "Don't rule out a university site", i.e., without checking to see whether its services to public schools are favorably regarded.

Another option is the large city school system. Chicago has volunteered to be the centre of an urban education network. Several foundations previously awarded grants to Chicago to set up a think tank "The Center for Urban Education" to give the General Superintendent an alternative source of ideas and strategies. Could the schools of other cities benefit? Or is Chicago simply too large to be useful to smaller cities? Perhaps a Milwaukee or Columbus or Detroit would offer a more manageable scale midway between giant and middle-size cities.

Still another location might be an intermediate school unit. Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan (especially Oakland and Wayne Counties) have developed area or sub-state regional staffs which concentrate on applied problem-solving and in-service education activities. Wayne County, Michigan (which includes Detroit) is as large as 19 of the states in student population served.

State-By-State Review

One technical or tactical question that NIE officials must grapple with is "What states to include or exclude" if there is to be a new regional lab. This is less of a question if CEMREL were to get more funds and if that which is needed is an expanded urban project for the Midwest.

State education leaders do have opinions on the question and bring a perspective of knowing something of what that state needs and whether any existing agent is helping.

States closest to CEMREL geographically and the most served by existing labs will pass in review first, then the Northern tier of states will be reviewed.

Iowa

CEMREL and McREL both now try to maintain relations and provide services. The President of the University of Iowa, a champion of Art and Education, serves on the CEMREL Board. CEMREL has organized a writing improvement project with Iowa schools. Robert Benton, the Iowa Chief State School Officer, has mixed emotions about the need for a new lab and feels a regional council with NIE support has more merit and would elicit his strong support.

Iowa feels an identity with Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois -- rural farm states with such similar median family incomes, values and support for schools. Dr. Benton felt that Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas belong together (as they do in Federal Region VII) and that South Dakota is really Western in outlook and terrain.

Illinois

CEMREL has a long relationship with Central and Southern schools and with the University of Illinois. Many Illinois schools have used CEMREL Art and Math materials. St. Louis is only 100 miles from Springfield.

Meanwhile, Illinois enjoys the benefits of a series of NIE capacity building grants in research dissemination and network creation. The state agency frequently draws on the products of many labs and centers almost as though they were interchangeable. Decisions are made on the quality of service sought and the track record of a lab in a given specialty, for example, minimal competency testing or teacher centers. Illinois also has access to the University of Chicago and Northwestern as well as a number of large public universities quite willing to participate in research activities. Few educators in Illinois look for another lab except that Chicago is ready to accept responsibility to help start a new one for city school systems. Dr. Don Gill, the new chief, is willing to work with those planning a new lab or council.

Indiana

CEMREL has been useful -- to the state agency, to the site at Jeffersonville, and to others.

The Chief State School Officer, Harold Negley, has shopped around for the services he needs -- from Indiana University or Purdue University, from Triangle Research (for a statistical study of violence and vandalism), and to others. He cites educational evaluation and accountability as a major issue and considers ECS and NAEP as valuable resources. He is proud of an eleven university network of economic education research and training

centers in the state. The National Dissemination Network (Title IV) is also held in high regard and used by teachers.

Indiana feels some similarity to Minesota and Iowa, but less so to Michigan or Illinois because of the big city factor in the latter two states. Aside from Gary and Indianapolis, Indiana is a rural state but has grown in its willingness to help with urban issues. The Desegregation Technical Assistance Center at Indiana University serves both Indiana and Illinois. Ball State runs a National Community Education Center (Mott Funds) and a bureau of educational research and field service.

Indiana University in the mid 1960's carved out as a specialty curriculum development rather than basic research. Millions of dollars in grants have contributed to the success of I.U. programs over the past fifteen years. However, the federal grant and contract money is less plentiful in 1980 than in the late '60's. Still, Indiana educators feel there are many sources of wisdom and stimulation within the state and less of a need to go outside. They conclude that the most useful and necessary function is that of brokering resources, of providing a link between people with solutions and those with problems.

Ohio

CEMREL is strong, with the Chief State School Officer, Franklin Walter, on the Board but the Appalachian Educational Lab (AEL) is popular and effective in seventeen counties (South and East). The Chief says, "No more labs, no more birth pangs — I'll stay with CEMREL". Yet he acknowledges very candidly that there is no way to serve 615 school districts directly. He would like NIE to consider Ohio for some of the research and dissemination

capacity-building grants that have proven their effectiveness in other states.

Frank Walter has a ~~clear-cut set of~~ state level priorities -- dropout and truancy prevention programs for the gifted (CEMREL is acknowledged here to be a source of help), improving the teaching of foreign languages, school district organization and general assistance in reaching the unsuccessful or less motivated student.

The idea of a regional R and D council has appeal. State agencies are unlikely to do much research but need the conduits to research producers in order to be useful to the local schools.

Southeastern Ohio has similarities to West Virginia and Kentucky which makes AEL a useful resource. Ohioans do not feel much affinity to Michigan. One key leader remembers "When we had a Michigan-Ohio regional lab, not much was left over for Ohio". Another termed that previous lab "a fiasco" and "unnecessary". Jack Corbally, who was at Ohio State at that time, recalls that the MOREL lab was a shotgun marriage just to make sure neither Ohio nor Michigan was left out of a regional lab.

Michigan

CEMREL is perceived as relatively new, rather distant geographically, and serving an excessively large area.

Art Jefferson, Detroit City Superintendent, has served on the CEMREL Board. He remains strongly committed to urban and inner-city school needs as a priority. He and his staff would support a new lab.

John Porter, the immediate past Chief State School Officer, states the need for a dramatically revised delivery system including the use of technology in the classroom, the mobilization of federal title funds

(especially Titles I and IV) to improve quality. He recommends Region V -- Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Minnesota as a Great Lakes region. He would volunteer Eastern Michigan University at Ypsilanti either as a convener, a site, or as part of a consortium of schools, states and universities. He defuses one of the criticisms of universities by saying that the Michigan Constitution provides for acceptance of federal funds without legislative reappropriation or approval.

Phil Runkel, the new Chief, is enthusiastic about a new lab -- one with teachers and universities and Detroit schools along with intermediate school districts and the state department of education. Doug Smith of the Governor's staff says that Governor Milliken is strongly supportive of the concept and would work with other Midwestern governors (he is senior in this group -- after 12 years as governor.

Chuck Williams of MEA says teachers would support a regional lab in which teachers participated as equals. The MFT remembers that teachers were involved in the MOREL proposal more than a dozen years ago but ignored when the organization was actually developed. MOREL failed because it could not compete with other federal initiatives such as Title III and Title V (strengthening state agencies) or with the Collective Bargaining Movement in the late 1960's.

Michiganders feel that in 1980 teachers - administrators and higher education can join hands to co-sponsor a new lab. They cite as proof a new $3.2 million state appropriation for educational staff development. Wayne State, Michigan State and U. of M. are already involved in the preliminary planning. They will soon prepare a rough outline of possible activities and try to secure cooperation from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana and

possibly the northern half of Illinois. It is not essential, Superintendent Runkel explains, that the lab be located in Michigan despite the initiative that state will take.

Wisconsin

CEMREL has offered help to Wisconsin educators and is viewed as useful but perhaps underutilized. The state has several powerful and dynamic universities, one at Madison with the IGE lab.

The state agency uses other labs as well as CEMREL and has close ties with the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee stresses urban concerns (education and community services generally) and would be a source of useful knowledge about metropolitan approaches.

Region V is seen as a natural area if there is to be a lab or council. Barbara Thompson is enthusiastic in her support of a new regional lab. The University of Wisconsin-Madison campus is wary about endorsing a new lab pointing out the three prior efforts that failed. Dean John Palmer says the idea of a regional council has more appeal to him at this time.

Minnesota

One long-time educational leader says "If you can justify regional labs, we deserve one", conceding that the 1960's lab was poorly run, lacked practical applications and realism.

Former Congressman Quie, now Governor, was supportive of a regional lab. The Chief State School Officer, Harold Casmey, would favor one if it emphasized technology as an instructional tool. He also stressed the problems of the Indian population and of sparsely settled school districts. He is willing to help organize a lab planning effort. University of Minnesota officials in the College of Education would also lend support.

CEMREL was seen as distant, trying to offer services, but relatively stretched in terms of resources.

Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin are perceived as states of similar size and with comparable problems. Michigan and Ohio are viewed as far away, but not impossibly remote. No one is that sure what the answer is but NIE can count on intense interest and involvement -- from the state, the state university, and the schools.

The Dakotas

Neither Chief State School Officer can muster any enthusiams for a new lab. "Let us go wherever we can get good help". McREL, the Far West and Northwest Lab, and the Education Commission of the States have been sources of assistance for one or both states.

The old Minnesota UMREL Lab is not fondly remembered, although one chief was on the board. "Not very satisfactory, the lab was grandiose, glamorous but not very down-to-earth"; "Studies will gather dust" or "We will be ripped off for more lab money" are among the pessimistic projections of fucure success -- from both states.

Minnesota, Denver and Kansas City are seen as major metropolitan areas each of which has useful resources. North Dakota says "We need help -- with a state staff of only forty we can hardly keep up with questions about basic education and how to fund it". Chicago schools alone have four times the students as has North Dakota. The Dean of the University of North Dakota, Vito Perrone, suggests several options:

1. a $50,000 grant to the two Dakotas as a mini-lab;
2. $200,000 for the Dakotas, Wisconsin and Minnesota;

3. a larger grant or project to include all of the above and Michigan.

He volunteers the University of North Dakota and its faculty which has been exceptionally committed to staff development and dissemination activities in recent years.

Possible Combinations

One important finding is that a number of educators in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa judge CEMREL to be useful or at least adequate with Ohio applauding the contributions of a second lab (AEL) near or in a portion of their state.

Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota feel much more distant from CEMREL and have, of course, been only recently offered "regional services". These three "Upper Midwest" states share climate, lakes, good government and strong support for education.

The Dakota Chiefs are less than enthusiastic about a new lab, and express no readiness to drop the McREL affiliation. Vito Perrone suggests that the University of North Dakota would be most interested and cooperative.

The urban educators would agree to form an urban collaborative or thematic regional lab. They would not preclude using CEMREL services. In fact, they know that Wade Robinson and CEMREL would again volunteer to host a much stronger urban consortium as part of its mission.

Region V -- Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota -- have the virtue of being an existing HEW/ED region with a modest history of cooperation. Chicago is a major transportation and conference center for this region. Of course, O'Hare Airport is considered too large, too

congested for some people but almost everyone passes through and can meet there as often as needed.

St. Louis is not a very central location for the Great Lakes region. It is South, almost Southern in outlook. However, the CEMREL staff is as cosmopolitan and urbane as any in the land. They do not find difficulty working with as many states or cities but only frustration in spreading rather limited resources so thinly. If need be, they would staff a more Northern office as well although they raise the useful question -- should more dollars go into more overhead or rather into more services to local schools and states?

CEMREL may be too large. The states surveyed find little in common with Kentucky, Tennessee or Missouri. But no state wants to be a satellite of another. Those states each with two million school children (Illinois and Michigan) feel and are especially self-sufficient. All six New England states in total serve only two million students. This is mentioned only to assert that as few as two or three Midwestern states could constitute a region of very adequate size.

Analysis of Options

The Midwest is not an easy-to-organize place. The medium-sized mostly rural states are not so sure they want either Illinois or Michigan, the states with very big cities, to dominate or soak up the limited resources available to a new lab.

If there is to be a new lab, educators in Minnesota or Michigan would help organize it and work very hard to make it work. Educators in the more Southern tier either find CEMREL sufficient or do not feel very strongly that a new lab is needed.

If a regional lab were located in Minnesota, the Dakotas would express some interest but feel sufficiently tied to McREL at the moment. The Dakotas are as much Western as Midwestern.

A regional council would enjoy good support from all of the Chief State School Officers within Region V. Deans and teacher leaders should also be included to make such a council as effective as it could be.

CEMREL is not ready to say that some of their territory should be transferred. CEMREL staff suggest that new money not be spent on administrative headquarters somewhere else but on programs in response to properly identified regional needs.

Several cities express their needs as unique and suggest an urban education laboratory, which concept commands some support from National constituency groups of researchers. These needs may be more national than regional.

Other options would be to do nothing, to select some existing entity, or strengthen existing institutions. Some land grant deans or Chief State School Officers might say, "If you have a million dollars, give us $100,000 apiece because we know the problems and simply lack enough field people". Again, this is a region with impressive universities and more innovative, dynamic state education agencies than in some regions.

Prescriptions and Prerequisites

Those who knew of the Northwest lab liked it -- its potential contribution to improving practice, its representative decision structure, its general responsiveness in and out of its region. This explains in part why a regional council notion, even with less money, as a concept generates

more enthusiasm than the prospect of a more fully staffed regional lab. To the Midwest, "ownership" and a sense of full partnership is as important as money.

In effect, more than a few key educators say, "I'll trade away idealistic innovation hatched by some expert for a participatory structure where I can attract resources to problems I feel are real". Maybe this is why organized teachers strongly support the teacher center concept rather than more structured top-down in-service education.

A few perceptive commentators expressed the view that a regional council or exchange project might in time become a regional lab. That sequence has some merit and could lead to both greater participation and more productive innovation in education in the Midwest.

Many expressed concern over the limited amount of money available and how little it would accomplish beyond creating the illusion of regional or total national coverage. The more enthusiastic proponents of a lab suggest a focus on "technology" -- or helping unsuccessful low-achieving students -- as worthy priorities. But these are complex and potentially very expensive topics for exploration and even for the dissemination of existing research findings.

Educators of the Midwestern region appear to know what labs can do and can't do, and know just how little just a little money will do. They are neither united nor convinced they know what works. They have seen labs fail either for lack of powerful political sponsorship or practical programs or sufficiently wide ownership, or possibly all of the above. They do not want to participate in "another program" unless they can shape it and build on existing state agency and university resources.

Midwest educators are favorably disposed to work with NIE on these questions, state a clear concern about the enormity of the issues, and will continue to participate in forums designed to plan effective strategies towards the improvement of teaching and learning.

Conclusion

The next most appropriate step would be to convene a Regional Education Council for the Upper Midwest. It should blend the best practices of the Southeastern U.S. Education Council and the participatory structures of the Northwest Lab. Let school districts, intermediate units, universities and state agencies contribute dues as well as some of the time of top educational leaders. Let them set a limited agenda of serious but solvable problems and work on them collaboratively for two or three years.

The Midwest is not really ripe for a full-scale lab. Michigan is enthusiastic but has only begun to organize some thoughts on paper. Minnesota would be the next most enthusiastic state. Wisconsin state officials would join in any serious effort. But making an interstate lab work will take a great deal of planning, energy, time and money. Key leaders in almost every state voice skepticism about whether a full-scale lab is really needed and whether NIE would have three or four million dollars to make it operate well.

CEMREL is overly extended and in some ways overly specialized -- in aesthetics and math. At present budget levels it can only offer very limited help and cannot provide much more if many in the field actually agreed to accept some help!

Rather than conduct a round of hearings on the need for a lab, it would be more constructive to assemble 6 chiefs, 6 or 8 deans and presidents,

6 or 8 teacher organization leaders and discuss the options with them -- at an airport location somewhere between St. Paul and Detroit. Such a group could elect to form a planning council or a regional council with an explicit problem-solving agenda for the next eighteen months and a very limited staff and budget. If there were to be a lab it could evolve out of such a council and with a very explicit sense of mission and participation.

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED ON NIE LAB FOR MID-WEST

Iowa

William Boyd, President, University of Iowa, CEMREL Board Member
Robert Benton, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Indiana

Dale Harris, Acting Executive Director, Indiana Teachers Association
Harold Negley, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Acting Dean of Education, Indiana University
Ron Boyd, Associate State Superintendent
Larry Brown, Acting Dean, Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington
Richard Willey, Dean of Education, Indiana State University
Frank Aguila, Director, Center for Urban and Multicultural Education
Lorenzo Bixon, Director of Curriculum, Indianapolis City Schools
Kay Stickle, Coordinator - Resource Center for Educational Services, Ball State U.
Shelley C. Stone, Assistant Head, Dept. of Education, Purdue U.
Ronald Walton, Superintendent, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents

Illinois

Ralphy Tyler, Science Research Associates, Chair of Educational Advisory Board
John Corbally, President, McArthur Foundation; former Pres. University of Illinois
Donald Gill, State Superintendent of Education
Nelson Ashline, Deputy State Superintendent; former Assistant Supt - Cleveland
Joe Burnett, Dean of Education, University of Illinois
Russell Zwoyer, Associate Dean, U of I - former Urbana Bd. of Education member
June Scannell, Field Consultant, Illinois Board of Education (recent dissertation on state-regional-local collaboration for school improvement)
Robert Healey, President, Illinois Federation of Teachers

Ohio

Franklin Walter, Ohio Superintendent of Education
Robert Burnham, Dean, College of Education, Ohio State U.

Michigan

Chuck Williams, Associate Executive Director, Michigan Education Association
Henry Linne, President, Michigan Federation of Teachers
Phil Renkel, State Superintendent of Instruction
Doug Smith, Education Advisor to Governor Milliken
Judith Lanier, Acting Dean, College of Education, Michigan State University
Eugene Paslov, Deputy Superintendent, Michigan Dept. of Education
Dave Donovan, Director of Research, Michigan Dept. of Education
Barbara Vance, Director of Educational Services, Wayne State University
Wendell Hough, Associate Dean, College of Education, Wayne State U.
David Kahn, Administrative Assistant, Michigan Association of School Administrators
Allen Zondlak, Director of Planning, Detroit Public Schools
Phil Kearney, Professor, University of Michigan - formerly of I.E.L. and of M.D.E.
Matthew Prophet, Superintendent of Schools, Lansing, Michigan
Phil Gannon, President, Lansing Community College
Diane Smolen, Director, Institutional Research, Lansing C.C.
Rae Levis, Associate Superintendent, Wayne County Intermediate School District
David Kazen, Director, Planning and Evaluation, Ingham Intermediate School District
John Porter, President, Eastern Michigan State U., Ypsilanti, former Chief

Minnesota

Harold Casmey, Superintendent of Education
Diane Lassman, Teacher Center, University of Minnesota
John B. Davis, President, Macalester College, St. Paul - formerly Minneapolis Supt.
Dean Gardner, Education Department, U of Minnesota

Wisconsin

Dr. Barbara Thompson, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Dr. John Palmer, Dean of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Dr. Marshall Smith, Director, I.G.E. Center, U. of Wisconsin-Madison

South Dakota

Jim Hanson, State Superintendent

North Dakota

Howard Snortland, State Superintendent
Vito Perrone, Dean of Education, University of North Dakota

CEMREL

Wade Robinson, Director, CEMREL
(see also Board Members Walters, Boyd, Lanman)
David Wiley, Dean, Northeastern University - formerly CEMREL staff

Washington, D.C.

David Florio, American Educational Research Association
Joseph Scheider, CEDAR
Allan Cohen, D.C. Office of the Illinois Board of Education
Harold Hodgkinson, National Training Laboratories as well as NIE staff member
Stanley McFarland, Director of Governmental Relations, NEA
Eugenia Kimble, Assistant to the President, American Federation of Teachers